

FILLEY PARK

BLOOMFIELD



Filley Park Restoration

Bond referendum proposal for
Completion of park restoration improvements

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Introduction:

by Roseanne Azarian, Filley Park Committee Co-Chair

This evening, the Filley Park Committee is here to ask the Town Council to show their support by putting Filley Park on the ballot come November to complete the restoration.

But what's on the ballot, isn't just about what we finish but what we start.

A Filley Park, fully restored, will fill this town with a new-found pride and respect for our open spaces like never before.

A Filley Park, fully restored, will bring together people who live here or want to live where you can play, kick back, escape or take a breath - in your own backyard.

Fully restored, a beloved and beautiful Filley Park will create a lush oasis in the center of town, open to all to call their own - every single day.

Let's get started.

A Rich History

To the right is a replica of the 'Filley Park History' interpretive sign, which is located near the bridge behind the parking lot at the park. The sign was commissioned, and text for the sign developed, by the Filley Park Committee. The sign theme and layout were created by Ravenmark, LLC of Berlin, VT.

The history interpretive sign is one more good reason to visit **Filley Park!**

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Nature's Gift Filley Park is a place that has sparked memories that span generations. It is a place for first dates and play dates. A place for fishing derbies and winter carnivals. A place to picnic or find peace among the trees.



In 1910, Alfred N. Filley donated 6½ acres of hillside woodland to the Bloomfield Village Improvement Association. In **1930**, Alfred Filley's nephew and niece donated an additional 5 acres of meadow, extending Filley Park across Wash Brook to Tunxis Avenue. The park reached its current size of 17 acres through six additional property acquisitions by the Association.

From Land to Parkland

Through the **1930s**, the basic form of the park was created. Trees were cleared, the original dam was constructed, the pond dug behind the dam, and a new bridge was installed. Funding came primarily from federal work programs, with supplemental funding provided by the Town. In **1942**, the western brook channel was dug, creating the island. In **1960**, the Town took over maintenance of the park and assumed full ownership in **1978**. From **1960 to 1980** the Town made additional improvements, including a new concrete dam, pond dredging and edging, bridge replacements, drainage, and the parking lot. The park persisted through many natural disasters. Three in particular, the **1916** chestnut tree blight, the **1938** hurricane and the Halloween ice storm of **2011**, did significant damage to the park's trees.

A Park and a Community Unite

Throughout its history, Filley Park contributed to the community and the community, in turn, contributed to the park. In **1932**, many citizens and town organizations donated trees and shrubs, including an oak tree donated by elementary students to honor George Washington. In **1935**, with the assistance of a number of volunteers, the Town celebrated Connecticut's Tercentenary at the park. At a dedication ceremony in **1938**, the Filley family was honored and the Village Improvement Association's 50th Anniversary was observed. Filley Park has hosted Easter egg hunts, fishing lessons, nature walks, and many other gatherings large and small.

Ice skaters have flocked to Filley Pond whenever conditions allowed. The first of several winter carnivals was held in early **1959**. The main event was to be an ice skating performance. As the date approached, the dam crumbled and the pond disappeared. The community came together to rebuild the dam and bring back the water, and the carnival went on as planned. This event attracted over 2,000 spectators from all over New England.



Photos left to right: Aerial view of Bloomfield Center, pre 1934, eastern portion of Filley Park, upper left; Ice skaters on Filley Pond, 1957; Washington Oak planted in 1932; Entrance to Filley Park from Tunxis Avenue, 1935. Photos courtesy of Wintonbury Historical Society.



The process of reinvigorating Filley Park began in **2008**. By **2011**, with the help of the Filley Park Committee – a team of dedicated volunteers – a clear vision for the park's renovation was in place. In **2015**, the streetscape phase of construction was completed. Stream and pond improvements were completed in **2019**. Additional phases of the renovation will continue in the future. With the continued support of Town leaders, current and former residents, local businesses, student volunteers, and the Committee, Filley Park will continue to evolve as an enduring asset forever rooted in the Bloomfield community.



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Filley Park was in decline



Something
had to be
done

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Planning efforts began in 2008 with the creation of the Filley Park Committee.

A design consultant (F & O) was engaged in 2010.

The design concept (at left) was developed; and approved by Town Council in 2012.

Environmental / dam permits were obtained in 2014 based on design development drawings.

With permits in hand, construction could proceed ... in a phased manner as funding became available.



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Streetscape and front plaza
were completed in 2016



Funding
provided by
Town,
CTDEEP,
Saxton Trust

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Stream & Pond restoration was
completed in 2019



Funding
provided by
Town &
CTDEEP

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Arboretum Island will be
completed in June 2021

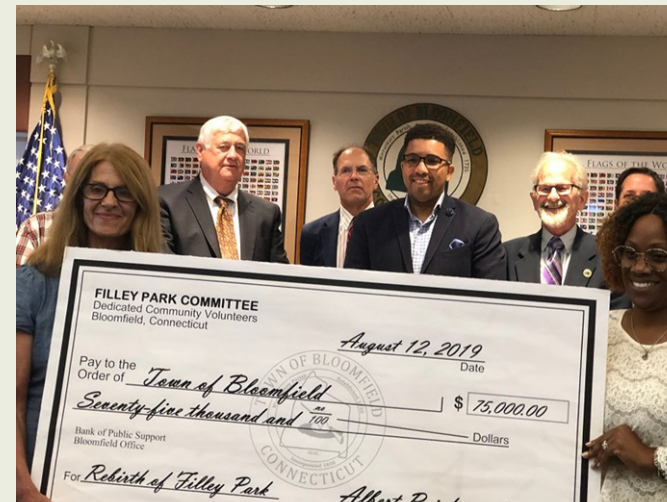


Funding
provided by
Town &
Community
Donations
through
Filley Park
Committee

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Community Involvement!



Over
\$200,000
privately
contributed
to park
restoration

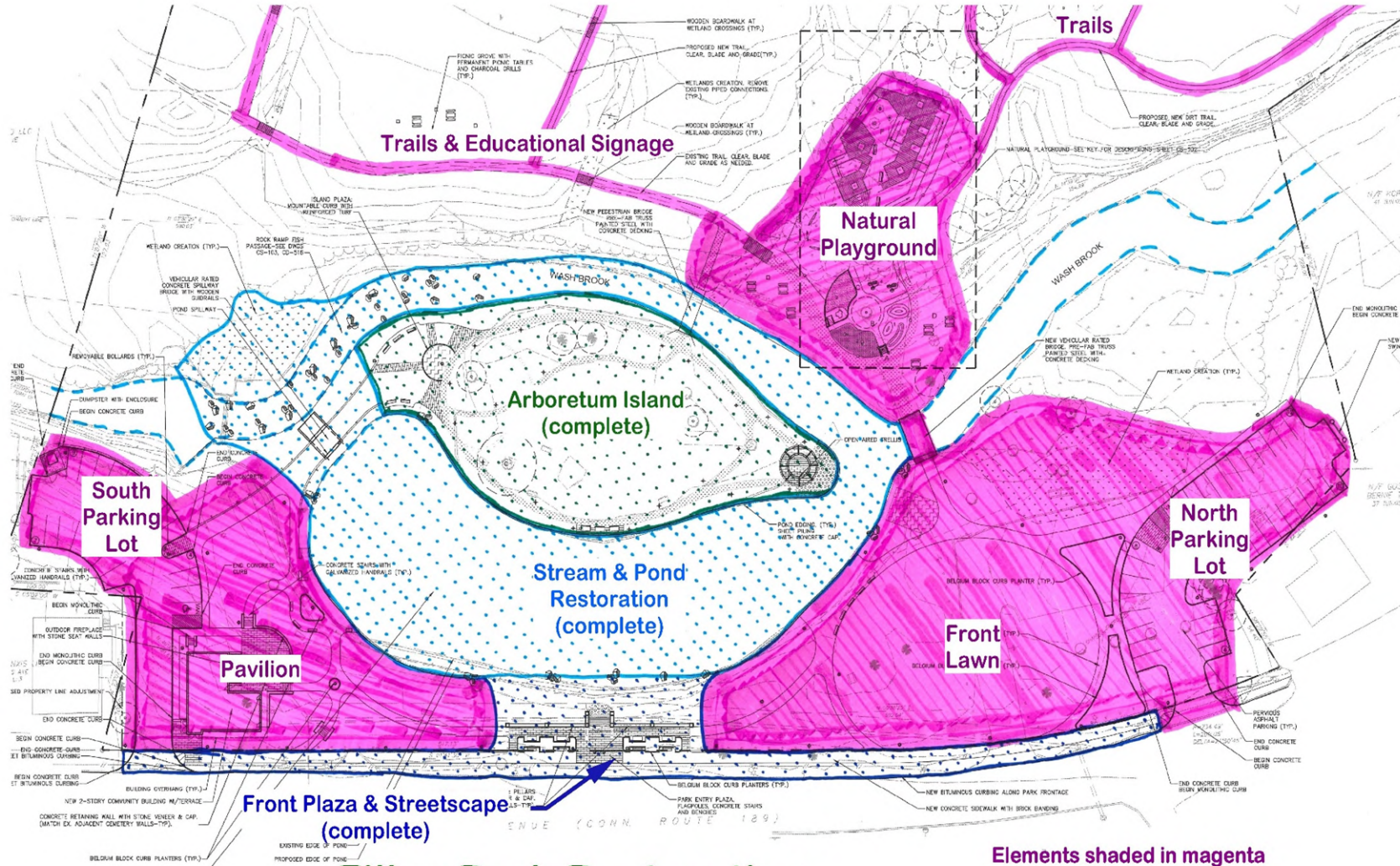
So Far!!

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Project elements remaining to be completed:

- Natural Playground
- Trails
- Educational Signage
- South Parking Lot
- Pavilion
- Front Lawn
- North Parking Lot
- New walkways for improved connections



Filley Park Restoration Project Elements

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Future Elements: Natural Playground



Combats nature
deficit disorder

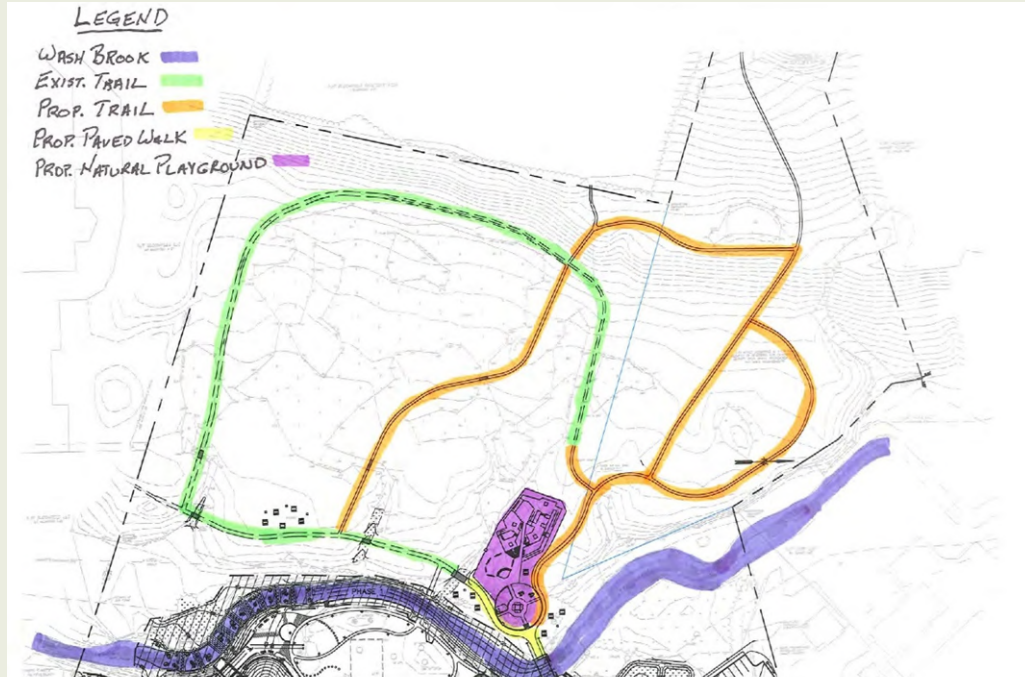
Promotes creativity &
abstract thinking

Improves concentration
& enhances motor skills

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Future Elements: New & Enhanced Trails & Educational Signage



Over one mile of
wooded walking
trail in Town Center

Interpretive signs
to educate the
reader on the
wonders of nature
being experienced

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Future Elements:

Parking Lots, Main Bridge,
Improved Connectivity



New parking lots at
both ends of Park

New access bridge
over Wash Brook

Accessible
connections between
Park elements

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Future Elements: Pavilion & Front Lawn



Wedding
Receptions
Reunions
Outdoor
Classroom
Relaxing in
the Park

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Filley Park Restoration Completion Cost Estimate

Main Bridge	\$150,000	A/E/Admin Fees	\$175,000
Playground & Trails	\$230,000	Contingencies	\$245,000
South Parking Lot	\$375,000	Financing Costs	<u>\$125,000</u>
North Parking Lot	\$400,000		
Pavilion	\$300,000	Total Project Cost	\$2,000,000

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Conclusion:

by June O'Connor, Filley Park Committee Co-Chair

We showed you where Filley Park was at the beginning of this latest renovation 13 years ago.

Planning for this work began in 2008 with the formation of the Filley Park Committee. You've just been shown a presentation illustrating what has been accomplished up to this point; but we still have more to do. Imagine, a menagerie of kids in the playground, story hours underneath the island oak and strolling past 200-year-old trees. Imagine weddings, reunions, birthday parties. Imagine fishing derbies, concerts, ice cream socials, skating parties.

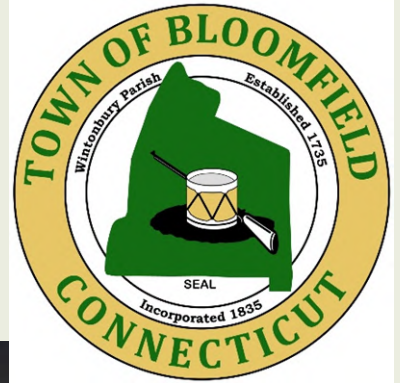
We can make this happen now. Or do we spend the next 10 – 15 years with the park in a nearly continuous state of construction of some sort; and the community constantly wondering if it will ever end. Do we throw away our community's involvement, do we say good enough or do we finish what we started in 2008?

You now have a permanent Filley Park Committee and we're very committed so either way you'll be seeing a lot of us. We want to come back and show you what else we've accomplished.

Thank You!

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**Bringing
Bloomfield's Jewel
Back to Life!**

Photo credits:
Dennis Hubbs
Roseanne Azarian
Fuss & O'Neill

Town Staff
Town of West Hartford
Miscellaneous